

MINUTES
OPC MEETING
October 18, 2012

First Selectman Jayme Stevenson called the meeting to order at 8:12 a.m. in Room 206 at Town Hall.

Present were First Selectman, Jayme Stevenson; RTM Chairman, Karen Armour; Board of Finance Chairman Liz Mao; Board of Education Chairman, Betsy Hagerty-Ross; State Representative, Terrie Wood; and Planning & Zoning Chairman, Fred Conze. Sarah Seeley was also present.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mrs. Hagerty-Ross stated that the Board of Education will serve as the Building Committee for system-wide work on the underground oil storage tanks at Darien School facilities. Remediation of asbestos work has been completed at the 35 Leroy Ave. site, the gas lines are being installed and the construction phase of the new Board of Education Central Offices has begun.

The feedback from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) has been positive. Darien is the first school to go through the accreditation process using the new standards for “21st Century Learning.” Especially positive were the comments regarding student interactions with teachers.

Mrs. Stevenson noted that the Student Resource Officer presented his first quarterly report to the Board of Selectmen this week. She has requested that the high school administration prepare to address the Board of Selectmen with its findings when the SRO gives the Board his first semester report. Mrs. Hagerty-Ross said that the high school administration has found his presence to be an asset to the school community and she’s happy to arrange for someone to address the Board at a future date.

BOARD OF FINANCE

Mrs. Mao conveyed that once the Board of Education is able to send its five-year budget plan, including capital expenditures, the BOF will create the Town’s five-year budget plan and vote on it in the end of November. She also mentioned that the BOF is considering adopting a policy to sweep capital accounts that appear to be idle. This generated some discussion of when a project is deemed completed and when a committee is considered defunct.

The Board of Finance would like to hire Matrix Consultants to review the fire departments’ capital expenditures. Additionally, Mrs. Mao said that she would like to see the fire departments all use the same format for bookkeeping. She and Mrs. Stevenson agreed that they would like to work together to make format changes to the Town’s budget books.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Mrs. Terrie Wood continues to address issues with 8-30g. One example is to have senior affordable housing count for one pint instead of half a point. Hopefully, new Bills on affordable housing will be ready before the session begins January 9, 2013.

In an effort to keep constituents informed of Bills under consideration Mrs. Wood plans to keep a blog and place relevant information in the media. This will allow constituents an opportunity to provide feedback on important issues.

PLANNING & ZONING CHAIRMAN

Mr. Conze noted that the siding is going up at the Allen O'Neil development. He expressed an interest in seeing the landscaping plans for the project.

Mr. Conze would like the Town to institute an Affordable Housing Trust Fund with a Board of Trustees to oversee the fund and help the Town establish responsible affordable housing developments in Darien.

A court decision is expected next week on the Town's right to appeal the decision for the Stefanoni's proposed affordable housing project on Leroy Ave. and West Ave.

RTM

Mrs. Karen Armour will be stepping down as Chairman of the RTM. She stated that it's her goal to assist with a smooth transition. The RTM votes on a new moderator on November 12th.

FIRST SELECTMAN

Mrs. Stevenson mentioned that she continues to deal with ongoing issues such as affordable housing and 8-30g. Other ongoing issues include: establishing sidewalk policies, continuing conversations with the BOE on shared services and consideration of a noise ordinance.

Mrs. Stevenson is pleased that the Town is headed towards kiosk parking technology in the near future. She is optimistic that some of the suggestions in SWRPA's Rte. 1 Study could be implemented to address local traffic issues and some modifications to the internal physical structure of Town Hall will be looked at in the upcoming year to help with customer service.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:02 a.m.
The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 15, 2012 at 8:00 a.m. in Room 206.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda O'Leary
Recording Secretary